

MAKING HEALTH CARE MORE AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE

Create a Michigan First Health Care Plan

We have already expanded health care in Michigan. Beginning this year, we will revolutionize it.

Our first step is a quantum leap: We will provide access to quality, affordable health care for 550,000 people. We'll create a new insurance product in this state: the Michigan First Health Care Plan.

The concept is simple: Give families who otherwise could not afford health insurance access to a basic, low-cost health care plan through a private insurance company. We will offer this plan through a new financial partnership with the federal government.

Michigan First will cover the small business employee who doesn't get coverage through work and doesn't qualify for Medicaid.

It will cover the self-employed worker who can't otherwise afford to purchase a private plan.

It will allow us to provide mental health services – because it is as important to cover mental health as it is physical health.

And this will make Michigan the state with the highest percentage of its population insured.

If you already have insurance, you may be asking yourself, "Why does this matter to me?" Because Michigan First will save you money, too. Having fewer uninsured people reduces the costs of insurance for everyone – you pay an extra \$730 per year for the cost of your insurance just to cover people who are uninsured. The more people who are insured, the less everyone pays.

Bring health care delivery into the 21st century

The second step in our plan to provide more affordable, better quality health care is to bring health care delivery into the 21st century.

In Michigan, we'll help our health care industry stop depending on your memory and their paper records as databanks. We are going to use technology to vastly improve the system. In the future, you will be able to give your pharmacist, your doctor, or the emergency room immediate access to your information, but you will control who sees it and what it is used for.

Think about it, never having to remember the name of the medicines you've been prescribed. Never having to fill out another form detailing your medical history, your allergies and the last time your 10-year-old got a tetanus shot.

In December, I convened a new Michigan Health Information Network of health care and technology professionals to develop that new network. Already, pilot projects are up and running in Southeast Michigan, right here in Lansing, and in the Upper Peninsula.

This investment in information technology will reduce errors, reduce duplication, reduce insurance costs, and increase your medical privacy.

Encourage Healthy Lifestyles and Personal Responsibility

Third: Quality, affordable health care requires a healthy initiative by citizens to make lifestyle changes.

We can decrease the rates of preventable diseases, like diabetes, lung cancer, and heart disease, by changing our eating habits, giving up smoking habits, and getting into the exercise habit.

In this year, we will continue to implement current strategies targeted at encouraging personal responsibility for healthy lifestyles and outcomes for all Michigan citizens by incorporating and extending the principles supported by Michigan's Surgeon General in the Michigan Steps Up initiative. These principles include focus on healthy behaviors through better eating habits, getting regular exercise, and avoiding tobacco use.

Tonight, I'm charging the Departments of Community Health, Labor and Economic Growth, and Education; the Surgeon General; and business leaders to lead our state in developing lasting, local public-private partnerships among schools, corporations, foundations, the faith-based community, public health, health care, and community organizations. These partnerships will help foster a culture of physical activity, prevention, and wellness in our communities, workplaces, and schools.